GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1902
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2015
Ban on TV Programmes
Mishra Shri Anoop

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has banned the telecasting of any television programme during the last three years and the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken by the Government to establish reasonable balance between decency and freedom of expression in telecasting of programmes in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE; MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY)

(a) to (c): The Constitution through Article 19 (2) allows State to impose reasonable restrictions on Freedom of Speech and Expression on certain grounds such as the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency, morality etc. through enactment of Law. This spirit of the Constitution is reflected in the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which while upholding the freedom of speech in Electronic Media imposes reasonable restrictions in public interest. Section 5 of the Programme Code provides that "No person shall transmit or re-transmit through a cable service any programme, unless such programme is in conformity with the prescribed programme code". Accordingly, Programme Code has been notified through the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 under Rule 6.

While there is no provision of pre-censorship of the content telecast on such TV channels, all programmes telecast on such TV channels are required to adhere to the Programme Code prescribed under the said Act and the rules framed thereunder. Action is taken whenever any violation of the said code is noticed or brought to the notice of the Ministry.

In the last three years and current year Government took action in 86 cases out of which in 20 cases the TV channels were asked to prohibit transmission for specific period of time ranging from 1 day to 30 days. A list thereof is annexed at Annexure. In other cases Ministry has issued specific warnings or advisories to channels to comply with the Programme/Advertising Codes or directed them to scroll apologies on their channel.

However, as required, TV channels are also issued general advisories on airing of programmes that may incite violence or create law and order problem under certain circumstances.

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